

the decree of the CP (b) U "On the struggle against child homelessness (May 1933)", under the SNK of the UkrSSR, an all-Ukrainian, and regional executive committees - local emergency commissions for the struggle against homelessness and begging, the establishment of rural child care facilities organized food items at schools, labor units from adolescents and the like were created.

With the establishment of Soviet power in the Ukrainian SSR, a number of measures aimed at overcoming homelessness among minors began in Ukraine, a network of institutions aimed at raising children was established. In practice, the orphanage, which was seen as an ideal of socialist education, turned into an institution that was called to the most complete and urgent solution to the 1920's problem of child homelessness.

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## **HENRICH ALTUNYAN: POLITICAL PATH FROM A DISSIDENT TO A PEOPLE'S DEPUTY**

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In the study of the democratic movement of the eve of the independence of Ukraine, the activities of former dissidents occupy an important part. The elections of the People's Deputies of the USSR (1989) and the Ukrainian SSR (1990) were democratic, and the former dissidents were able to take part in them as opposition to the Communists.

Although Kharkiv had many members of the dissident movement, a special place among them is taken by Henrich Ahannisovich Altunyan. He is the only Kharkiv dissident to become a professional politician, being elected to the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine.

Among the historiography of H. Altunyan is the book B. Zakharov "Essay on the history of the dissident movement in Ukraine (1956 - 1987)". Among the sources concerning H. Altunyan it is worth to mention his autobiographical book "Price for freedom". The ideological views of H. Altunyan are presented in his article "Reforms are needed but not talks about them." H. Altunyan expressed his point of view on the rehabilitation of political prisoners in the article "Rehabilitation is needed in order will never happen again repressions". H. Altunyan describes the formation of his political outlook in the article "I was 'especially dangerous state offender'". Another important sources are his speeches in the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine.

H. Altunyan was born on November 24, 1933 in Tbilisi. According to the nationality, he was an Armenian but he was also a Ukrainian in soul. In 1944 the Altunyan family moved to Kharkiv.

Being a Soviet patriot H. Altunyan served in the Soviet Army. He studied at Kharkiv Higher Aviation and Engineering School (1951 - 1956). Later H. Altunyan worked as a military engineer in Uzin, Kyiv region. In 1961 he became a teacher of Kharkiv High Command Aviation College.

At first H. Altunyan was a member of the CPSU and supported the government's policy. The opposition activity of H. Altunyan began in 1964 after L. Brezhnev came to power. He voiced disagreement with the policy of the Central Committee of the CPSU at the party meetings. Later H. Altunyan got acquainted with the dissidents P. Grigorenko and P. Yakir. In 1968 H. Altunyan was expelled from the CPSU and from the ranks of the Soviet Army. The reason for this was the dialogue with the dissidents and spread of works by A. Sakharov. After that, H. Altunyan abandoned communist views and became a more radical dissident.

In 1969, H. Altunyan took part in the formation of the Initiative Group for the Protection of Human Rights in the USSR. The group operated using non-violent methods, its purpose was to force the Soviet regime to respect the human rights. A specific characteristic of the Initiative Group was its general-democratic orientation, its members did not advocate granting of independence to the republics of the USSR. There was no a common political platform among the group members.

The first step of the initiative group was creation of petitions and collection of signatures under them. In 1969 P. Yakir wrote a petition on the permission to return Crimean Tatars to the Crimea and to protect P. Grigorenko. One of the signatories was H. Altunyan. Among the Kharkovians, the petition was also signed by V. Ponomarev, V. Nedobora, S. Karasik, A. Levin, T. Levina, S. Podolsky, D. Lifshits, O. Kalinovsky, L. Kornilov. This petition was sent to the Supreme Soviet of the USSR.

On May 28, 1969, the Initiative Group sent a letter to the UN Human Rights Committee. The letter contained information on the violation of human rights in the USSR. In July 1969, H. Altunyan was arrested. On November 26, the court was held and H. Altunyan was sentenced to three years of imprisonment.

In 1972 H. Altunyan returned to Kharkiv and continued his dissident activities. During this period, he was maintaining friendly relations with B. Chichibabin, M. Rakhlin, I. Kravtsiv, A. Zdorov. The main dissident activity of H. Altunyan at that time was spreading of samizdat.

On May 30, 1980, a search in the house of H. Altunyan was conducted and several books of samizdat were found. On December 16, H. Altunyan was arrested. On March 31, 1981, the court sentenced him to 7 years of imprisonment, followed by 5 years of exile. In prison, H. Altunyan displayed disobedience to the administration of the colony.

March 9, 1987 H. Altunyan was released. In 1990, he was rehabilitated.

After returning from the second detention, H. Altunyan lived in Kharkiv and continued his opposition activities. In 1989, he joined the People's Movement of Ukraine for Restructuring. In 1990 he was elected a people's deputy of the Ukrainian SSR from the Kyiv region of Kharkiv. As a deputy of the Verkhovna Rada of the USSR, H. Altunyan elaborates a draft Law of the USSR "On Rehabilitation of Political Prisoners and Repressed people". He voted for this law in May 1991 and the law passed. On August 24, 1991, H. Altunyan voted for the Declaration of Independence of Ukraine.

In 1994 H. Altunyan lost his election to the Verkhovna Rada and ended his active political activities. He was engaged in to civil activities of the Memorial Society, wrote a book of memoirs "Price for freedom" in 2000. June 30, 2005, H. Altunyan died.

H. Altunyan is a bright representative of dissident and democratic movement. On his example, one can observe a gradual departure of the Soviet opposition from the ideology of communism: in the 1960's Altunyan was a communist, and by the 1990's he became a liberal. Such a political evolution was logical, based on the incompliance of communist ideology with real Soviet life. At that time more and more Soviet citizens were disillusioned with the political power of the CPSU.

H. Altunyan managed to achieve his political goal by becoming a deputy of the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine. He has made a significant contribution to the achievement of Ukraine's independence and establishment of a democratic political regime in Ukraine.

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